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ABSTRACT

Recommendations and study results of the Council on Learning's "Education and the World View" project, which involved the Council and a task force of educators, public officials, and business leaders, was concerned with students' understanding of the world in relation to the United States' role in world affairs. The 1980 national survey of 3,000 college students at 185 campuses included a test of global knowledge, a report on the students' backgrounds and interests, their foreign language proficiencies, and their attitudes toward global issues. Based on the findings, it was estimated that the vast majority of the country's undergraduates of traditional college age have only slight exposures to global issues during their college years, and that opportunities for gaining an adequate world view seemed better for students attending the well-endowed research universities and highly selective colleges. Campuses with strong humanities and foreign language traditions were found to be more likely to provide international perspectives. The task force suggested that college graduates' global understanding should enable them to analyze domestic and international development and that they should possess a deep knowledge and understanding of another culture and general competency in a second language. General task force recommendations and specific recommendations for faculty, trustees and college administrators, scholarly societies, teacher educators, corporate and philanthropic donors, and to the federal and state governments are offered. A series of seven publications prepared by the Council for use by colleges and universities are also briefly described. (SW)

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Task Force Statement on Education and the World View*

Statement and recommendations by a national task force on American responsibilities as a global power and appropriate educational directions.

Over the last two years, the Council on Learning and a national task force of educators, public officials, and business leaders, have examined the capacity of the country's colleges and universities to provide college students with an adequate understanding of the world, particularly as these relate to the United States' role in world affairs. The urgency of world issues and the progressively complex nature of America's leadership position in the world require levels of educational preparation for all citizens different than that traditionally provided in this country.

Our recommendations, as well as a number of supporting documents prepared by the Council on Learning to encourage the widening of learning approaches, are based on a number of findings. Principal among these are the first national assessment of college students' global understanding and a survey of campuses to assess the international aspects of college learning at the undergraduate level. Although student preparation in regard to global perspectives is just as important at elementary and secondary as at graduate and postgraduate levels, this task force chose to focus principally on undergraduate education because this level of education has been given insufficient attention in the development of dimensions of international learning.

Believing that the broadening of educational horizons must ultimately depend on the imagination and initiatives of the colleges and universities themselves, the Council on Learning and the task force seek to encourage imaginative international dimensions at the undergraduate level. Such efforts will require the support and vision of both the academy and the American public at large.

Task Force Recommendations

We make the following **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS** drawn from our findings:

1. While many college programs make substantive contributions to basic global understanding, much more needs to be done for most American students. Efforts to enhance the campus' traditional domestic concentration will require comprehensive reviews of the total curriculum and the learning experience of each academic institution. To merely add international references to what has been largely treated as domestic concerns does not reflect a world in which these two dimensions have long existed as an integral mix. Special emphasis in this regard should be given to the humanities and the social sciences; attention must not only be given to the historical and contemporary aspects in courses and syllabi but also to the future.

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*Composition of task force is listed at the end of this document. For further information regarding this project, contact Executive Director, Council on Learning, 271 North Avenue, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801. Released June 1, 1981.

2. Global perspectives—including knowledge, cultural sensitivities, problem-solving, and foreign language skills—as part of the college experience can rarely be achieved unless those goals have the visible and constant support of campus leadership, as well as the trustees of the institution, state regents and legislatures, and other relevant agencies.
3. A major full-scale effort to internationalize undergraduate learning is necessary to prepare us for the 21st Century. This includes improved coordination of efforts in all academic sectors; substantially better teacher preparation; considerable reviews and revisions of textbooks, syllabi, and curricular offerings; strong leadership directions from both academic and public quarters; and renewed control of the learning experience by internationally enlightened faculty.
4. Similar efforts at internationalizing the educational experience should be encouraged at the elementary and secondary school levels. Without improved educational preparation in a child's early years that relate to world changes, an inadequate learning motivation in the college years provides further impediments to the educational goals that we recommend.

We also make the following **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**:

To College and University Faculty

1. The infusion of international dimensions into every major college course of study has become a crucial challenge for our colleges and universities that wish to bring their educational missions abreast of global realities. Adding individual international courses will not alone be an effective option as we move toward the end of the century. Some combination of diffusion throughout the general curriculum and the creation of pertinent courses becomes the necessary first step in the revitalizing of the college experience.
2. While the process of internationalizing college curricula is by definition a multidisciplinary process, its intellectual premises should be firmly rooted in the strengths of each discipline. Intellectual legitimacy will not be served if disciplinary quality is in any way compromised.

An important part of this intellectual process should include the addressing of the larger ethical and moral questions involved. Descriptive content and data are not enough. On the other hand, the trend toward epistemological redivisions and subspecialization has tended to further isolate international content rather than making it part of the larger knowledge base. Such knowledge walls do not exist in the real world.

3. The international dimensions of the college experience will be most successfully guided by established, enlightened faculty from mainstream disciplines. The depth and insight a respected colleague can bring to the process often will accelerate campus internationalization. An influx of new, fresh insights from younger faculty is highly desirable as well.
4. Foreign language instruction is in serious need of revival. While foreign languages ought to be acquired during precollegiate years, the obligations of undergraduate institutions are nonetheless central to the broader goal of preparing students for a global age. It may be prudent for small and moderate-sized institutions to concentrate on fewer foreign languages, and do so competently; offering a wide range of language study without students reaching adequate levels of proficiency is largely counterproductive to the educational process.

Practical language competence should be a central institutional objective. Academic institutions should seek imaginative ways to improve foreign language instruction, for example, by integrating language learning into traditional courses in the general curriculum and by using methods that speed the language learning process in its basic stages. Also, campuses should motivate students to learn foreign languages, and expand exchange programs and internships in these areas, so that students can extend their language competence into other subject areas and outside programs.

To Trustees and College Administrations

1. The strength and success of enlarging global dimensions of the college experience will depend on the expressed commitment of the campus leadership. Administrative responsibility, with strong faculty attention to such matters, needs to be made highly visible. The Council's national survey of effective international programs and approaches confirms the necessity for such top-level commitment.

2. Academic administrations should not confine their activities purely to classroom learning. Ample opportunities exist to provide broader learning environments beyond the classrooms of American campuses. Many such opportunities are described in the Council on Learning's new book on curricular strategies, *The World in the Curriculum*. Faculty competence in these nonclassroom areas of global learning should also be enhanced. The academic leadership needs to provide a strong commitment for study and experience in other cultures during the undergraduate years.
3. Campus administrations must give clear commitment to faculty renewal and development in the various areas of international education. This should range from the use of institutional resources, to release time, to enhancement of experiential opportunities, including exchange programs and time abroad.

To Scholarly Societies

1. The scholarly societies should encourage ongoing and comprehensive reviews of the principal undergraduate textbooks which impart disciplinary knowledge. As the Council's separate report on the responsibilities of scholarly societies indicates, few academic disciplines presently review teaching materials in light of America's shifting role in world affairs. To illustrate the relatively parochial mindset of many college textbooks, the Council on Learning commissioned a study of 51 most commonly used textbooks in political science, used predominantly in introductory and survey courses. "The textbook in American government that adequately presents America's place in the world from a global perspective," summarizes the author, "has yet to be written." Yet textbooks remain the tools of basic student understanding for the discipline.
2. The scholarly disciplines—particularly history, political science, anthropology, economics, geography, sociology, and foreign languages—need to undertake a comprehensive effort to encourage their members to make a more subtantial professional contribution that imparts global dimensions, including normative and futures aspects, in their teaching. Scholarly societies can encourage this process by inviting papers for publication, scheduling discussion at national and regional meetings (as has been done by the International Studies Association), appointing teaching task forces, and by continually exposing their members to the global aspects of their disciplines.

Teacher Education

1. There is an urgent need for colleges of education and teacher training institutes to give high priority to a more appropriate preparation of teachers. According to an American Council on Education study, only five percent of all certified teachers in the United States have received education or training in international subjects. College faculty who have been exposed to global issues through study, foreign travel, and international exchanges also need to be given broader opportunities to review their professional interests in light of now dominant global issues.
2. The relatively poor quality of student knowledge of global affairs inheres in part in the limitations of primary and secondary school curricula, and the lack of teachers' international exposure or experiences. The elimination of foreign language arts and basic social studies from many elementary school curricula must be reversed. In the secondary school curriculum, a reemphasis on social studies, history, geography, and foreign language arts, as well as an infusion of cultural information, insights into language instruction, and the imparting of crosscultural awareness in social studies instruction, becomes necessary.
3. These opportunities to enrich teacher education with global perspectives come at a particularly good moment. A new generation of apprentice teachers will enter education programs within a few years when teacher shortages are likely to develop in many areas of the country. It is important to begin curricular plans now, so that revised course offerings are in place before these teacher cohorts enter their undergraduate experience. In this process, the states' teacher education requirements should be upgraded to include requirements on global perspectives in education.

To Corporate and Philanthropic Donors

1. The encouragement of broader curricular undertakings does not necessarily require large sums of money. Funders could do much more to encourage the reflection of world realities by making modest incentive grants. These could range from release time for key

faculty to assigning as a major part of a senior administrator's tasks comprehensive responsibilities for international education. Even the availability of modest grants and seed money to enlarge such curricular visions can trigger relatively larger programmatic rewards, especially at campuses already poised for this next step.

2. Funders need not confine their program giving to those areas solely identified as "international." Much of the funders' existing grant program inherently or potentially include global dimensions, but are not identified as such. Funders who in their announced program areas emphasize their pervasive interest in advancing global dimensions may find surprising responsiveness by academic institutions, particularly those in the midst of general education revisions.

3. For larger funding organizations, a professional staff person with a strong international background and sophistication can do much to make the funding organization more responsive to intellectual needs related to global conceptions of learning.

To The States

1. It lies increasingly in the interests of the states to educate their citizens for a new world role. A few state education agencies are beginning to take on a facilitating and coordinating role in encouraging global perspectives. Some forward-looking state governments—such as Oregon and Washington—have drawn from the recent report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies and are sponsoring their own commissions and task forces. These exercises build a wider awareness and are a necessary first step toward sustaining academic interest in these global questions.

2. Global education can be enhanced by state education agencies through programs that may already be in place. These would include faculty development programs and state-sponsored workshops for faculty and staff. It is also in the economic interests of states to encourage programs that bring institutions of higher learning and transnational enterprises into closer collaboration, leading to improved foreign trade. Task forces can be assigned at the state level to review what must be done in these areas. Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have undertaken such major efforts.

3. States should encourage broader opportunities for students from many cultural backgrounds, including non-resident and foreign students, to participate in the learning experiences of their peers. Such participation, whether in or outside the classroom, contributes substantially to the enhancement of student global understanding.

To The Federal Government

1. While both the Congress and the Executive Branch have shown considerable sophistication over the years in connecting an educated citizenry and the training of experts to national interests and national security, funding for such programs has been wholly inadequate. This is calamitous for a global power that relies for its full functioning on citizen understanding. When federal budgets tighten, international programs are often cut early in the whittling process. It is difficult to understand this approach in light of the need for the fuller public understanding of a world in unprecedented flux.

2. The time has come to integrate federal international education programs into the mainstream of education. This should be reflected in both federal education structures and funding programs. Federal international education support systems and categorical programs, however currently modest, should signal a closer integration of the substance of American education. Fragmenting international education at any level no longer makes sense in the modern world.

Education and the World View Documents

Having assessed how well college students are equipped to understand global events and circumstances, and to what degree the college experience prepares young Americans for the world's complexity and uncertainty, the Council on Learning has prepared a series of seven publications for use by colleges and universities. These documents will assist campuses achieve the further internationalization of undergraduate education and help them better reflect present world realities. These documents include:

Volume I: A consideration of the role of the scholarly disciplines in enhancing global perspectives in the curriculum.

Volume II: An 11-part volume on curricular strategies and recommendations for undergraduate education, by Humphrey Tonkin and Jane Edwards of the University of Pennsylvania.

Volume III: A handbook of effective international programs, with full descriptions and professional contacts, and a collection of workable ideas.

Volume IV: A cogent series of readings on the challenges to undergraduate education in a changing world.

Volume V: An overview of the Educational Testing Service's nationwide assessment of college students' global understanding, with a focus on the results.

Volume VI: A conference and workshop kit containing eight major elements and recommendations for use by education planners and evaluators.

Volume VII: The full technical report of the ETS student survey, with analysis, interpretations, and data, including all knowledge test questions with answers and attitude, background, and language self-report items.

The project's fact-finding focused on student understanding of global issues, on undergraduate programs and learning approaches, and other aspects of the college experience as these deal with international concerns.

Findings

Though the training and education of expert professionals for international service, research, and teaching are a high national priority, the task force focused particular attention on the issue of citizen education in a global age, which principally takes place over K-12 and college levels. The final report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies dealt in detail with the preparation of professional cadres and made a number of recommendations directed primarily at the federal government in sustaining our competitive intellectual advantage vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

The Educational Testing Service, commissioned by the Council on Learning, developed the first **survey of college students in regard to their global understanding**. This assessment of a stratified sample of 3,000 college students was conducted at 185 campuses around the country in the spring of 1980. The nation-wide inquiry included a test of global knowledge, a report of the students' backgrounds and interests, their foreign language proficiencies, and their attitudes toward global issues.

The knowledge test was constructed by distinguished scholars and experts at a relatively demanding level. Some items covered topics which could have been answered from information gained from consistent attention to news media with good international coverage. Others required more formal instruction or reading likely to be gained in high school or college courses.

Knowledge scores were generally disappointing. College seniors answered an average of one-half of the knowledge questions correctly, with freshmen and two-year college students achieving only 40 percent correct. Less than 15 percent of all seniors and less than 10 percent of all freshmen and two-year students tested answered more than two-thirds correctly. A very small proportion of the students "have the level of knowledge necessary for an adequate understanding of global situations and processes," concludes the ETS study. (Though television was cited by students as the predominant source of information on current events, those with high frequency of newspaper reading scored better than those who relied primarily on television viewing.)

While 80 percent of freshmen reported having regular high school class discussions on global issues, only half reported frequent discussions in college. More than one in ten reported that such discussions never occur.

Certain patterns emerged: Questions on current events were answered correctly by more students than questions with historical content. More students answered social science questions correctly than those dealing with the humanities. Questions on health, distribution of natural characteristics, art and culture, and population were answered better than questions on energy, relations among nations, human rights, and religious issues. Students' inabilities in these areas are clearly a reflection of the weakness in their underlying academic preparation.

By using pretested self-assessments of foreign language competence, it was also possible to obtain a national picture of foreign language capabilities of the college generation. Ninety percent of the seniors and more than three-quarters of other college students had formally studied a foreign language. Despite this high participation rate, only seven percent judged themselves sufficiently fluent to understand a native speaker even at a slow pace.

This may be partially attributable to the steadily declining foreign language opportunities and requirements at both the secondary school and college levels. Even students who had taken foreign language courses for several years reported little confidence in their ability to perform anything but the most basic tasks. Studying or living in another country, where foreign language competence is necessary, seems one of the few practical routes for providing a sense of confidence in foreign language usage.

History majors scored highest on the knowledge test, with engineering and mathematics students following close behind. Education majors—the teachers of tomorrow—scored the lowest. In summary, the ETS researchers conclude that "from the new evidence at hand, serious learning gaps at the college level would seem to persist even in 1980."

In parallel with this new student assessment, a team of Council on Learning researchers evaluated the strengths of international perspectives in college programs. Some two hundred of the nation's 3,200 academic institutions were identified as possessing the rudiments of excellent international learning environments. After a full evaluation of 130 institutions, the Council selected 62 undergraduate programs and six college-based consortia with strong international dimensions. Their full descriptions are being released in a new handbook of exemplary programs. These institutions are not the only strong and effective undergraduate international programs. But they serve as representative and feasible examples for other campuses to draw on.

The Council's **study of undergraduate programs** makes possible the following **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**:

1. The vast majority of the country's eight million undergraduates of traditional college age have only slight exposures to global issues during their college years. We estimate that approximately five percent of all college course offerings deal with global questions. In an era of global interdependence, the task force believes this to be inadequate. By any measure, the nation's economic, political, and cultural involvements are internationally far more dominant than the average American college experience suggests.
2. Although opportunities for gaining an adequate world view may seem better for those students attending the well endowed research universities and highly selective colleges, these institutions serve only 10 percent of the American college population. Even though such opportunities may be greater at such institutions, strong disciplinary orientations and traditional academic conservatism create departmental walls that can preclude integrated global learning.
3. Imaginative international education programs that occur at smaller and less elite institutions many times benefit from having in place creative individuals, particular institutional histories, or exceptional leadership. Although the smaller institutions may seem to possess greater flexibility for change, obstacles built up by sheer survival issues can preclude new initiatives. At the same time, international education seems to be increasing in strength at two-year colleges.
4. While adequate funding for international education programs is important, some of the more imaginative international education programs identified by the Council appear to thrive without significant external funding. The success rate seems more related to persistence and entrepreneurship, commodities not readily found on many campuses.
5. Campuses with strong humanities and foreign language traditions were found to be more likely to carry forward successful international perspectives.
6. A critical mass of participating students and faculty in international studies seems to be necessary before such programs can gain a more secure and permanent place in the college experience. Campus observers reported that they are seeing an increasing demand by students for courses with international dimensions.

Summary and Conclusions

From the outset, the task force deliberated what ought to comprise a college graduate's global understanding:

- **A fundamental understanding of the key elements of global and national interdependence**, as taught through the major fields of study in the humanities, the social sciences, the pure sciences, the applied sciences, and the professional disciplines. This understanding should equip college students to analyze and respond intelligently to domestic and international developments. Such competence should be evidenced by a student's independent analysis of the most important strands of the new global circumstances and comprehension of the

United States' increased interdependence with other nations for its national survival and economic growth.

- **A deeper knowledge and understanding of another culture**, as seen through its history, geography, language, literature, philosophy, economics, and politics. Student perceptions of another culture will substantially enhance their ability to understand the nation's needs and changing world position, and enable intelligent consideration of highly complex developments on the world scene. The sensitivities learned about other cultures, the increased capacity to analyze issues and consider other viewpoints, enhanced tolerance of differences, all contribute to a citizenry better able to cope with 21st Century problems and better able to approach conflict resolution.
- **General competency in a second language** as a basis for the fuller comprehension of other cultures and of one's own culture in the global context. Skills in specific languages are becoming increasingly essential for meaningful communication in a wide range of contexts. Students' access to effective foreign language instruction is therefore a necessary requisite to the college experience in the 1980s and beyond.

Our recommendations are consonant with achieving these objectives. The gaps that still exist between the typical academic preparation and world issues lead us to call for a substantial strengthening of the learning experiences to encompass a more world-oriented education. Neither the required student knowledge nor the educational capability is now sufficiently present to make that fuller national competence realizable.

To provide that necessary understanding of America's changing role in the world, a fundamental commitment will have to be made by our national leadership to bring about the necessary sensitizing of those in schools and colleges. Only by such a process can this new generation be familiar with, rather than estranged from, a world in unprecedented flux and uncertainty. From all of the evidence available, the task force believes that greater sophistication by this college generation in their understanding of the world—both present and future—must take high priority in educational planning for the eighties.

Most external funders of college programs do not presently encourage a widening of global learning perspectives. The federal government has been historically parsimonious in its international education funding. With but few notable exceptions, philanthropic and corporate giving to higher education has been radically reduced in support of international education. Also, state education agencies by and large have shown only a marginal interest in these issues. This is so despite the fact that virtually all states have come increasingly to rely on foreign trade and investments for revenues and jobs. Severe fiscal constraints imposed on academic institutions make the revitalizing of undergraduate learning more difficult though not impossible.

In our relations abroad, American interests are likely to be severely tested in the years ahead. Only by broad public discussion and understanding of the key questions of public policy, supported by a strengthened citizen understanding of the underlying issues of global relationships, can our foreign relations be successfully conducted in an open and participatory society. Educators of the eighties and nineties are responsible for making certain that Americans enter the 21st Century with a view as wide as the world.

International public questions—ranging from geopolitical concerns to global ecology, energy, food and hunger, to the world economy, and to Third World and Eastern Bloc issues—must now be seen in the political arena as issues largely integrated into the country's domestic concerns. The historic division between domestic and global agendas is rapidly disappearing. In the economic sphere, the internationalization of national economies and markets is already in an advanced stage of development. Betweeen 1950 and 1979, American exports increased from $10.2 billion to $175.3 billion. American assets abroad grew from $19 billion to $377 billion in the same period. Foreign direct investments in the U.S. rose from $3.4 billion to $40.8 billion.

These Council on Learning documents, together with our recommendations, are designed to give impetus to the effective internationalization of the college experience in this country. To do nothing is to be left behind as a country and as a people. We can no longer avoid those educational responsibilities that emerge from a global condition in which the ignorant and the innocent will be the losers.

June 1, 1981

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Education And The World View

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Related documents released in conjunction with the task force report on internationalizing undergraduate education.

I. **A discussion and review of the responsibilities of the scholarly disciplines in a global age.** $4.95

II. **The World in the Curriculum: A 272-page curricular guide on every aspect of the campus environment.** $6.95

III. **A national directory of effective international college programs. Spiral-bound.** $7.95

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V. **Summary volume of national student assessment of what they know and believe about the world.** $5.95

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VII. **Complete ETS report of national survey of the global understanding of 3,000 college students.** $10.95

VIII. **Additional copies of this task force report: $2 for first copy and $1 for each additional copy.**

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